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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Shuichi Shiitani

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EXAMINER

DESHPANDE, KALYAN K

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/839,141	Applicant(s) SHIITANI ET AL.	
	Examiner Kalyan K. Deshpande	Art Unit 3625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 April 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 17-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 17-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

The following is a non-final office action in response to the communications received on April 8, 2008. Claims 1-10 and 17-25 are now pending in this application.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 8 has been entered.

Response to Amendments

Applicants' amendments to claims 1, 17-19, and 21-25 are acknowledged. Applicants had previously cancelled claims 11-16.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed on April 8, 2008 have been fully considered but are not found persuasive. Applicants argue the claims as amended. As such, a discussion of the rejected claims as amended is below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-10 and 17-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maes (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0002502) in view of Shultz (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0061211).

Referring to claim 1, Maes teaches “an online shopping method, comprising: generating article data having features extracted from an article picture related to a data sending rank” (see Maes paragraphs 0048-0051 and paragraphs 0057-0059; where products or articles have attributes (features) that define the order in which the products are presented to the user.), “generating article picture arrangement data in which said search resultant article pictures having more similar features extracted from corresponding article pictures are more closely disposed on a two-dimensional plane” (see Maes paragraphs 0048-0052 and paragraphs 0057-0059), “sending the article picture arrangement data to a user terminal, said article picture arrangement data indicating display positions of said search resultant article pictures on a screen of the user terminal, and said display positions being independent of the data sending rank” (see Maes paragraphs 0048-0052 and paragraphs 0057-0059), and “displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each display position in accordance with the article

picture arrangement data on the screen of the user terminal as initial search results in a receiving order” (see Maes paragraphs 0054-0055).

Maes fails to explicitly teach “defining an order in which said article picture is to be sent”, “determining similarities between features among a plurality of search resultant article pictures in response to an article search by a user”, “sending the search resultant article pictures in accordance with said order of the data sending rank which is defined prior to said article search”, and “displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each display position in accordance with the article picture arrangement data on the screen of the user terminal as initial search results in a receiving order, thereby displaying an article picture with a higher data sending rank earlier at the display position”.

Shultz, in an analogous art, teaches “defining an order in which said article picture is to be sent” (see Shultz paragraphs 0060-0061; where an order is determined and articles are presented to a user in that order.), “determining similarities between features among a plurality of search resultant article pictures in response to an article search by a user” (see Shultz paragraph 0060; where matching between user input and attributes is done. The matching is done based on various criteria.), “sending the search resultant article pictures in accordance with said order of the data sending rank which is defined prior to said article search” (see Shultz paragraphs 0060-0061; where a ranking of the search results are presented to the user.), and “displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each display position in accordance with the article picture arrangement data on the screen of the user terminal as initial search results in a

receiving order, thereby displaying an article picture with a higher data sending rank earlier at the display position” (see Shultz paragraphs 0060-0061; where a ranking of the search results are presented to the user.). The Examiner notes, Shultz discloses a method wherein information may subsequently be sorted according to user preference and/or a predefined search result sorting routine. Such sorting may pertain to specific sorting criteria, for example, by order of importance, relevance or hierarchy of the information retrieved from database **133**. Example sorting criterion might include, a distance from the user identified location (e.g., step 232), corresponding advertising information (e.g., step 234) and/or business information (e.g., step 236). Business information may be sorted according to various criteria, for example, alphabetical criteria, such as by the name of the business, size criteria, such as the size of the business, price criteria, time criteria, event criteria, or any other sorting criteria that might be helpful to a user (Shultz: paragraph 0060). At the time of the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the system of Maes to have included the teachings of Shultz because, unfortunately conventional search engines often return a wide range of unusable search results (Shultz: paragraph 0006).

Referring to claim 2. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the features of the article picture arrangement data is generated in accordance with a combination of a similarity of a feature of each resultant article picture and at least one selected from the group consisting, a keyword representing the feature of the article,

and article classification information regarding classification of the article in accordance with the features thereof, or a combination thereof (Maes: paragraph 0048 through paragraph 0052).

Referring to claim 3. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider (Maes: paragraphs 0050).

Referring to claim 4. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items (Maes: paragraph 0054).

Referring to claim 5. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items (Maes: paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 6. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the

presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article (Maes: Figure 3 through Figure 6).

Referring to claim 7. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider ((Maes: paragraph 0048 through paragraph 0052).

Referring to claim 8. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items (Maes: paragraph 0054 through paragraph 0055).

Referring to claim 9. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items (Maes: paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 10. Maes further discloses an online shopping method wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the

presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article (Maes: Figure 3 through Figure 6).

Referring to claims 17-20. Claims 17-20 are rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Referring to claims 21-22. Claims 21-22 are rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Referring to claim 23. Claims 23 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Referring to claim 24. Claims 24 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Referring to claim 25. Claims 25 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-10.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kalyan K. Deshpande whose telephone number is (571)272-5880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeff Smith can be reached on (571) 272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jeffrey A. Smith/
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